Gay bishop fracturing church, ex-leader says

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The former spiritual leader of the world's 77 million Anglican Christians warned Thursday that approval of a gay bishop in New Hampshire has fractured the church to such an extent that "we are in danger of becoming a Christian sect."

In Colorado Springs for a summit called by the conservative Anglican Communion Institute, Lord George Carey, the recently retired Archbishop of Canterbury, said he supports efforts by the Episcopal Church to be inclusive.

He said, however, the U.S. branch of Anglicanism went too far by consecrating openly gay V. Gene Robinson as bishop last November.

"Since I have left as archbishop I have watched with a great degree of concern and sadness about the developing length to which the church has gone to be as inclusive as it has," Carey said. "I think it's gone beyond the Scripture and the Christian tradition."

At a Mass Thursday night, Carey said Scripture clearly defines marriage as a union between a man and a woman.

He said Robinson's consecration leads the church away from Scripture.

Bill Lewis of Colorado City, who attended the Mass, said he understands both sides of the debate but leans toward the conservative view that disapproves of Robinson's consecration.

"On the other hand, I'm sympathetic to the wishes and desires of people of different sexual orientations to want to be recognized in the structure of the church," he said.

The institute outlined a series of proposed punishments for the Episcopal Church.

Among the proposals were barring bishops who supported Robinson's consecration from attending certain meetings, including those called by the Archbishop of Canterbury. If they do attend, they would have no voice or vote on decisions.

The institute also outlined a plan in which individual parishes that supported the ordination of Robinson would remove themselves from the Episcopal Church and become independent parishes.

"We regard it as cowardly and, to a certain extent, dishonest to continue to maintain that it is still a part of the Anglican Communion," institute President Rev. Christopher Seitz said.

Carey said he considers the institute's plan a good guideline with the potential to keep the Anglican Communion together.

Seitz said the institute has submitted its proposed punishments to the Lambeth Commission, set up by the current archbishop to discuss the implications of the Robinson consecration.

"The American Episcopal Church is not unlike American political power, as such that it does not consult, it goes its own way," Seitz said of how the church is perceived internationally.

OPI

OUR VIEW

The road to hell . . .

Car pool lanes unfair and inefficient

We're all for plans to widen Interstate 25 between Monument and the South Academy exit, even if some Preble's meadow mice have to jump four lanes to get safely from shoulder to median. But let's do it without any High Occupancy Vehicle lanes.

HOV is one of those feel-good experiments in social engineering that never quite delivered on its promise — a nation of happy car-poolers living under pollution-free skies. Growing evidence, in fact, suggests these lanes do little to conserve fuel or reduce automobile pollution, and that they may even worsen both while raising safety problems as drivers maneuver into, out of and around them.

The length of expressway involved is relatively small, adding to our sense that, in this context at least, the lanes would be an expensive bit of symbolism. And accepting federal money earmarked for these specialized lanes can lead to problems down the road, as some states and cities that have changed their minds about the lanes discovered. Then there's a fundamental question of fairness: Shouldn't all the lanes added be equally available to every driver who pays the gasoline taxes that fund them?